







A Somali boy is comforted by a woman Friday after his mother died from sickness and hunger in the village of Darwanag, located 35 kilometres northwest of Mogadishu, the Somali capital on the Indian Ocean (AFP photo)

## U.S. said working with allies on Somalia handover resolution

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States has begun consultations with allies on a formal United Nations resolution that would shift command of forces in Somalia to the world body, according to a senior State department official.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said consultations began more than a week ago "for a new resolution enlarging and strengthening the U.N. presence."

Ever since the extraordinary American-led effort began in December to use military troops to protect convoys bringing food to starving Somalis, the United States has encouraged participating countries to offer troops that would stay in the country after the Americans depart, he said.

"So it is from a practical matter something that we've been working on and now we're at the phase where we're starting to work on the U.N. resolution in consultation with others that will do that," the official said.

The first unit of U.S. Marines left Somalia for home Tuesday and Wednesday after handing over their duties in the famine-stricken southern town of Baidoa to Australian replacements.

The U.S.-led force, numbering 36,000 men from 20 countries, has secured Somalia's towns, air-

ports and ports, and escorted food convoys to the main famine centres.

The chief U.N. representative in Somalia, Ismat Kittani, disputed U.S. assertions Monday that the U.N. would take over total command of forces in Somalia in about two weeks.

The spokesman for U.S. forces in Somalia said in Mogadishu he thought the handover from an American-led task force could be accomplished in "a couple of weeks."

U.N. sources said U.S. and United Nations officials had decided on a phased transition with two commands operating until the U.N. forces took control of most of the areas now run by American troops.

There are about 25,000 U.S. military personnel in Somalia now, along with 11,000 additional soldiers from 20 other countries. The United Nations expects to have 15,000 to 20,000 forces under its command after most American troops withdraw.

The Security Council must still adopt a resolution mandating the new operation and authorising rules of engagement.

### Violence continues

A Somali youth climbed a wall at a U.S. Marine compound in

northern Mogadishu Friday and was shot to death after he threatened a sentry with a pistol, officials said.

Another Somali man was wounded by Marine gunfire as he and three others tried to run a roadblock set up on the street outside the compound moments after the initial shooting.

Also Friday, gunmen in Mogadishu opened fire at three relief agency vehicles, injuring four people, including a Swede, a U.N. official said.

The vehicles belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Save the Children, and Swedrelief, a Swedish aid agency, were attacked about 250 metres from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) office, said the official who did not want to be identified.

A Swede working for Swedrelief suffered a minor injury on his

hand and a Somali working for the agency was also slightly injured, the official said. UNICEF employees, believed to be Somali, were also hurt, but the extent of their injuries was not known. No one was injured in the Save the Children vehicle, the official said.

The shooting at the Marine compound was the second shooting incident of the day.

## Israel honours its harshest critic

TEL AVIV (AP) — To his fans, Yeshayahu Leibowitz is the modern incarnation of an angry old testament prophet. To his critics, he is a crank who delights in insulting Israel's most hallowed institutions.

The 90-year-old professor who says Israel should give up Arab lands has been named to receive the Israeli prize for lifetime achievement.

The awarding of Israel's highest honour to its harshest critic has touched off an emotional debate that goes to the core of Israel's complicated self-image as a democracy and a Jewish nationalist homeland.

"I'm disgusted," said former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Angry calls flooded radio talk shows. Legislators and army officers protested. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin asked at a cabinet meeting whether the award could be withdrawn.

A three-member committee, appointed by the education minister, awards the Israel prize each year to a dozen recipients. Some past winners have been Arab poet Emile Habibi — another controversial choice — and conductor Zubin Mehta. The honour includes a \$7,500 prize.

Education Minister Shulamit Aloni, a leftist, told Mr. Rabin she could not interfere with the committee's choice.

Dr. Leibowitz emerged as a voice of dissent in 1967, when he wrote a book titled "The Jewish State" in which he argued that the 1948-1949 war would turn Israel into a Jewish state, not a Jewish state.

"I wrote on the seventh day that this brilliant military victory will prove to be a historical and political disaster for the state of Israel," Dr. Leibowitz said recently.

Against the euphoria of the time, his was a voice in the wilderness and might have gone unnoticed if Dr. Leibowitz had not been one of Israel's finest and most eclectic minds.

Born in Latvia and educated in Germany, he is a professor of biochemistry and neurophysiology, an authority on Jewish philosophy and religion, and an editor of the Hebrew encyclopedia.

He also is an orthodox Jew who wears a black skullcap, prays daily in synagogue, and delights in his secular audiences by his contempt for Israel's religious establishment.

Dr. Leibowitz argues that the domination of two million Palestinians has corrupted Israel and given rise to a "Judeo-Nazi mentality in certain circles."

The elderly professor was asked sarcastically on a talk show if he believed Israel would put Palestinians in concentration camps and kill them in gas chambers.

"It is known to me that the state of Israel is keeping thousands of Arabs in concentration camps," he replied, referring to camps for Palestinian prisoners.

Dr. Leibowitz says soldiers should refuse to serve in the occupied lands.

"Our problem is not to liberate the Palestinians; our problem is to liberate Israel from this curse," he said in an interview in his dry, book-crammed study in West Jerusalem.

Dr. Leibowitz believes many share his views but "lack the courage to say clearly what they mean."

"I am their voice," he said, looking up from under bushy gray eyebrows, his frail body hunched forward. He said Mr. Rabin agrees with his call for territorial withdrawal "but lacks the courage" to campaign for it publicly.

## Iraq and Bosnia highlight U.S.-France differences

By Terri Jones  
The Associated Press

PARIS — As the jousting with Iraq escalated to bombing runs this month, France took part in the punishment while seeming to attack its American partner at the same time.

Its haughty reaction Sunday, after U.S. forces launched cruise missiles on a factory outside Baghdad, left diplomats scratching their heads. The same defence ministry that ordered French jets into action on previous days described Sunday's operation as "strictly American."

Washington was further startled this week when the senior government spokesman, Louis Mermaz, quoted Foreign Minister Roland Dumas as saying the Baghdad raids exceeded the mandate of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

The next day, the foreign ministry refused to confirm Mr. Dumas had made the statement.

Americans are not the only ones puzzled. Many in France feel their foreign policy is in disarray after the Iraq minkiness and flip-flops on Bosnia.

Last week, Mr. Dumas said France was prepared to liberate single-handedly detention camps run by Serbs in Bosnia. He backpedalled when alarm was expressed that France might act outside the authority of the United Nations.

"The foreign ministry has the irritating tendency recently of displaying pitiful weakness," editorialist Patrick Sabatier said Thursday in the newspaper Liberation.

The ministry "makes it appear, without daring to say it, that France is no longer on the same wavelength with its anti-coalition ally," Mr. Sabatier said. "One wonders whether this verbal inconsistency is a sign of thoughtlessness, or worse, incoherence."

"There is no coherence in the government's overtures," said Charles Pasqua, the conservative former interior minister. "Not when it is reduced to turning Kouchner into both the foreign and defence minister."

Health Minister Bernard Kouchner, an advocate of humanitarian intervention, recently helped negotiate a prisoner exchange in Bosnia.

The France-American friction harks back to the 1991 Gulf war, when in the heat of battle France's defence ministry abruptly resigned, complaining about America.

U.S. officials in Paris say there are feelings in Washington that France is an unreliable ally, chafing at U.S. dominance of world affairs and itching to do something on its own.

There is resentment on both sides over acrimonious trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Bush administration targeted with penalty tariffs late last year, and a trade war was barely averted.

U.S. officials say they are still puzzled over Mr. Dumas' outburst. France and the United States had been in almost seamless agreement on Iraq prior to his remarks.

One diplomatic source said Mr. Dumas could be feeling pressured over the March elections, which are expected to sweep in a conservative government and cost Mr. Dumas his job.

Paris and Washington have reconciled, however, over the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Western European Union, the fledgling military wing of the European Community.

Last summer the alliances practically tripped over each other rushing ships to enforce the arms embargo on Bosnia. Officials say there has been progress in recent months to coordinate their action.

On Thursday, the two sides agreed that in an emergency, a 35,000-member French-German army corps created in 1991 would be under NATO command.

The corps had been seen as a potential competitor to NATO. France belongs to the alliance but is not within its joint military command.

## Israeli cabinet members favour compromise in expulsion crisis

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The majority of cabinet members in Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government want to make a compromise that will bring to an end the matter of the Palestinian evictions, Israel Television reported Friday.

Ten of the 18 ministers said in an anonymous poll that international pressure as well as stalled peace talks warranted a compromise that included the return of many of the over 400 alleged Muslim fundamentalist activists, the television said. Seven told Israel Television the decision should stand at any price and one refused to answer.

The television stressed that the results of the poll would not necessarily be mirrored in the cabinet which holds open votes. But the poll showed the change of mind that has taken place since the cabinet's near unanimous decision Dec. 17 to expel the Palestinians.

Israel, meanwhile, is seeking to delay a U.N. Security Council debate on the issue until after Israel's supreme court has ruled on the issue, media reports said.

Also Friday, an Israeli daily quoted a government source as saying a defence ministry check found an additional 10 of the 415 Palestinians expelled last month to Lebanon were ousted by mistake.

In the poll by Israel Television's political affairs reporter, 10 of the 18 cabinet ministers said

they would agree to a compromise "which would involve... an early return of all or most of them."

Seven ministers said the government should stick to its original decision to expel the Palestinians for periods ranging from nine months to two years.

Almost all the ministers said the decision to expel them, approved by the cabinet with one abstention, was right at the time. Those who favoured a compromise said it was necessary in light of international developments resulting from the expulsion.

The U.N. Security Council, the European Community and the United Nations, Israel's chief ally, have criticised the expulsions, and urged Israel to take back the Palestinians.

The Security Council is expected to convene soon to decide on measures against Israel for its refusal to abide by Resolution 799, which demands Israel let the evictees return.

Three missions to Israel by special U.N. envoys have failed.

### Arab pressure

Diplomats from five Arab countries have called at the State Department to try to bring pressure on Israel to allow the Palestinians to return.

The diplomats presented an Arab League statement to Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian demanding that Israel

permit their repatriation. "They discussed the deportation issue with a view toward resolving it in a constructive manner," the State Department said afterward Friday.

The Clinton administration would like the Arabs to defer any drive for U.N. sanctions against Israel until after the Israeli supreme court rules on the expulsion. The court is expected to rule early next week.

In addition, administration officials want to evaluate a report by a U.N. fact-finding mission that returned Friday from a visit to the evictees, who are camped in southern Lebanon.

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria were represented in the meeting, held at their request. The department's brief statement said Mr. Djerejian told them the United States consults closely with the United Nations on the matter.

Meanwhile, Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States, stressed in an interview the expulsion was temporary and the Palestinians had a right to appeal the order.

Mr. Djerejian, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria, is trying to get Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestinians and Israel to agree to resume negotiations on a Middle East settlement and self-rule for Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He met with the Arab diplomats for about an hour.

## 10 killed in Erbil carbomb

BAGHDAD (R) — A carbomb exploded in the Kurdish-held city of Erbil, killing at least 10 people and wounding many more, relief sources said Saturday.

"A big carbomb went off Friday and a number of people were killed and many more people were wounded," one source told Reuters.

The source, quoting relief workers in the area, said the death toll in the northern Iraqi city was at least 10.

In Ankara Friday, a Kurdish party official said eight people were killed and 120 wounded in the explosion.

"The bomb exploded in a cen-

tral and crowded area at 1310 local time. It also wrecked many nearby stores and cars," the official from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) told reporters.

Serchil Qazzaz, the PUK representative in Ankara, said the blast occurred at a shopping area around the ancient castle dominating the town.

Safecan Dizayee, another Iraqi Kurdish representative, said the explosion "set off by a time device attached to a car left unattended in the street for a while," had killed 11 and injured 132.

A U.S. officer, heading a Western military mission in the Kurdish town of Zakho near the

Turkish border, confirmed the blast, but gave a smaller toll figure. The officer, speaking of condition of anonymity, said five people were killed and 40 to 50 others were wounded.

It was not immediately possible to account for the differences in reported casualties.

The blast was the most deadly in a series of attacks since last summer.

Carbombs, grenade or rocket attacks mainly targeting the personnel and premises of the U.N. and other international relief agencies resulted in several U.N. guards were injured.

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Saudi king invites Afghans to talks

DUBAI (R) — King Fahd, appealing for an end to the fighting in Kabul, has invited warring Afghan mujahedeen groups to meet in Saudi Arabia for talks on ways to settle their differences. "In the name of Islam, I urge you to lay down your arms and let reason, conscience and logic govern you," the king said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency late Friday. "I address to you a sincere invitation to Saudi Arabia to meet... and discuss the your views and differences." The Saudi monarch, among the world's most influential Muslim leaders as the custodian of Islam's holiest shrines, issued his appeal against a backdrop of intensified fighting in Afghanistan. More than 100 people were wounded in Kabul alone on Thursday. Saudi Arabia was one of the major backers of the Mujahedeen groups during their 14-year war against the Soviet-installed government that was swept from power last April. In his announcement King Fahd renewed Mujahedeen groups of Saudi Arabia's former support, mostly in cash for military equipment. Saudi Arabia also gave tanks, artillery and rockets captured from Iraq during the Gulf war.

### Kuwaiti elected head of U.N. food agency

ROME (AP) — A Kuwaiti banker who directed the rebuilding of his country after the Gulf war has been elected president of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the U.N. agency announced Friday. Fawzi Hamad Al Sultan, 48, was elected in a closed session of IFAD's governing council Thursday. IFAD, created in 1977, makes loans for projects to grow food and ease rural poverty in developing countries. Unlike other U.N. agencies, the Rome-based IFAD gets its money through periodic fund-raising drives rather than assessing its members. To be elected, a candidate must receive at least two-thirds of 1,800 votes. After two rounds of voting, Mr. Sultan had received 953 votes, while a candidate from Venezuela, Enrique Ter Horst, had 349. Mr. Ter Horst then withdrew his candidacy, allowing Mr. Sultan to be elected by consensus, said IFAD spokeswoman Jacky Sutton. Mr. Sultan succeeds Idriss Jazairy of Algeria. Mr. Sultan was managing director of the Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East and director of research at the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. In the aftermath of the Gulf war, he led the Kuwait emergency and recovery programme, which oversaw the rebuilding of the emirate's economy.

### Church group victim of 'Jewish soap' hoax

LANTANA, Florida (R) — A local church group dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism has been inundated with phone calls after a hoaxer ran a newspaper advertisement saying it was selling "bars of Jewish human soap." The Florida Christian Task Force, a little-known group which does not even have a listed telephone number, was deluged with phone calls this week after someone placed a small advertisement in the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel. "Bar of Jewish human soap. Real WWII relic. \$9.95," the ad said. It listed the phone number of the church group. The Sun-Sentinel published a prominent page three apology, saying the ad had slipped through in error. It appeared in a section of free advertisements for bargains priced at \$50 or less. "The Sun-Sentinel inadvertently published an ethnically offensive classified ad in Wednesday's editions. The Sun-Sentinel apologizes and has taken appropriate action to ensure a mistake like this does not recur," it said. The church group said it received dozens of calls, most expressing horror or anger but a few inquiring about the soap. The church group Friday was not answering its phone. Callers heard a taped message, explaining that it had been the victim of a hoax and that anti-Semitism is "the very thing we stand against."

### European stand elates Greek Cypriots

NICOSIA (AP) — Greek Cypriots were elated and Turkish Cypriots angered Friday by a European Parliament resolution denouncing the Turkish occupation of north Cyprus. "Undoubtedly this is one of the finest resolutions we have had from this forum and a strong weapon for promoting a Cypriot settlement and entry to the European Community," said Andreas Mavromatis, the spokesman of the government-controlled by Greek Cypriots. Kanan Atakol, the foreign minister of the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state, said: "The European Parliament had no right or jurisdiction to adopt such a resolution. We shall not accept it." The breakaway state in the Turkish-occupied part of the island is recognised only by Turkey. The resolution adopted Thursday blamed the Turkish Cypriot side for the lack of progress in U.N.-sponsored negotiations for the reunification of the island in a two-zone federation. The European Parliament resolution "reaffirms its conviction that the continuation of the status quo in Cyprus is unacceptable and poses wider threats to the region." It also "calls upon the government of Turkey to withdraw its occupation troops from the Republic of Cyprus in accordance with the relevant U.N. resolutions."

### Sri Lanka regrets strikes against Iraq

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka said Friday it deeply regretted civilian casualties in recent allied air strikes against Iraq. "Recent air attacks on Iraq have caused civilian casualties in Iraq which the government deeply regrets. The tragic loss of innocent lives must be averted," Foreign Minister Harold Herat told parliament. He said all unsettled issues should be pursued in terms of United Nations resolutions. "There should be no recourse to unilateral action which is not in keeping with the purpose and spirit of U.N. resolutions," Mr. Herat said. "Any escalation of the conflict in Iraq is likely to have grave repercussions, which would extend beyond the Gulf region and cause a threat to international peace and security."

### Turkey seizes 72 kg of heroin

ANKARA (R) — Turkish gendarmes seized 72 kilograms of heroin Friday hidden in an abandoned car in the eastern town of Baskale, Anatolia news agency said. The agency said the heroin was sealed in 102 plastic bags. Security forces were looking for the car's owner. Turkey is on a major drug-trafficking route from Afghanistan to Western Europe through Pakistan and Iran.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 73111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Reves d'enfants
17:40	La Peste de Xapaton
19:00	New French
19:15	Le Journal de l'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:30	News in Arabic
20:30	Who's the Boss
21:10	Documentary
21:30	Science Workshop
22:00	News in English
22:30	Law And Order
PRAYER TIMES	
06:00	Fajr
06:30	(Sunrise) Duhr
11:47	Dhuhr
14:41	'Asr
17:05	Maghreb
18:26	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetifich Tel. 810740	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 63275	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 62490	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De Saile Church Tel. 661757	
Terrestrial Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77524	
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932	
Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulfinch supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be fair and winds will be light and variable, changing at times to southeasterly moderate. In Amqba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max. temp.	
Amman	2/14
Aqaba	6/21
Deir	0/15
Jordan Valley	7/19

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Ahmad Yousef	786384
Dr. Ahmad Khamis	747694
Dr. Mohammed Al-Nahel	693925
Dr. Khalid Mu'addi	743500
Firas pharmacy	661912
Perdows pharmacy	783336
Al Asara pharmacy	670955
Nadim pharmacy	626072
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shimkani pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847623
Fifth circle pharmacy	813141
Samir pharmacy	661898
Talal pharmacy	621366
Al Amir pharmacy	626425
Al Azzam pharmacy	888681
Hisham pharmacy	771957
IBS824	
Dr. Abdo Abu Hisham	226764
Alqada pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Maizoon Haddadin	985750
Khalifa pharmacy	985417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Stood Bank	715121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	665800
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	891461
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101

### HOSPITALS

RJ Company	636381
RJ Freight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport	08-53200

## HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalifa Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Al-Jalil Maternity, J. Amn	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmoudai	664171/4
Shmoudai Hospital	669151
University Hospital	843845
Al-Musayib Hospital	567227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/3
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Musayib	771015
Al-Bashir, J. Admash	7751126
Arney, Marica	89161115
Queen Alia Hospital	06224030
Qadafi Hospital	874155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983283
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## HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

## Queen Noor attends piano recital

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday patronised at the Royal Cultural Center a piano recital by Ammar Hachicho. The recital, organised by Noor Al Hussein Foundation's (NHF) National Music Conservatory (NMC), included pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Bartok, Tchaikovsky and Liszt. Mr. Hachicho was born in Germany to a Jordanian father and a Lebanese mother. A first prize winner of a number of German competitions for young musicians, Mr. Hachicho began performing in public at the age of 11, and had his first public recital as a piano soloist in 1983. All proceeds of Saturday's recital will go to support the Scholarship Fund of the Needy and Talented Outstanding Students of the Conservatory, which also draws for its financial resources on local private contributions. Ten per cent of the conservatory's needy students benefit from this fund each year. The event was sponsored by Lufthansa German Airlines in cooperation with Jira Rihani and Sons Co. In addition to Her Majesty, the recital was attended by the Minister of Information, members of the NHF Board of Trustees, the NHF president and members of the NMC's Steering Committee.

## Cabinet plans international activities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Saturday decided to send a delegation to Hungary Monday to hold talks on Jordanian-Hungarian civil aviation cooperation. The Civil Aviation Authority director will lead the Jordanian delegation on a three-day visit. The council also decided that Jordan take part in a tourist exhibition to open in Madrid on January 26. It said Jordan will be represented by the Ministry of Tourism and Royal Jordanian, as well as the private sector. Jordan will have its own pavilion at the week-long Madrid exhibition. The Cabinet delegated Mr. Ahmad Nawawi, director general of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) to attend the 64th meeting of the Board of Directors of the Arab Satellite Communication Organisation to open in Dubai Feb. 13.

## Envoy to Senegal presents credentials

DAKAR (Petra) — Jordan's ambassador to Morocco Adnan Al Talbouni Saturday presented his credentials as Jordan's non-resident ambassador in Dakar to Senegal's President Abdo Diouf. Mr. Talbouni conveyed to Mr. Diouf His Majesty King Hussein's greetings and wishes of further progress and prosperity to the people of Senegal. Mr. Diouf commended "the international reputation Jordan enjoys as a result of King Hussein's wise leadership." He said he was looking forward to visiting Jordan as soon as possible in response to an invitation extended to him by the King.

## Jordan's ambassador meets Yemeni minister

SANAA (Petra) — Yemeni Education Minister Mohammad Al Ja'fari met Saturday with the Jordanian ambassador to Yemen to discuss the prospect of Jordan's sending new teachers to his country. The meeting also involved discussions on means of enhancing bilateral relations in educational fields.

## 1st batch of marine police to graduate

AMMAN (Petra) — The first batch of marine police will graduate in Aqaba Monday, in a ceremony to be attended by Public Security Department (PSD) Director Major-General Fadel Ali Fuhaid. PSD sources said this group will form the nucleus of the marine police force which will join the rest of the PSD forces in maintaining national security. The main task of the force will be maintaining security in Aqaba and combating drug trafficking in the port city, the sources said.

## JVFA recommends interest exemption

AMMAN (Petra) — The Board of Directors of the Jordan Valley Farmers Association (JVFA), held a meeting Saturday and discussed a primary report by the federation's secretary general on the effects of the frost wave which swept the Jordan Valley Jan. 17-18. The board recommended that the government exempt farmers from interest on loans granted in 1992 and 1993, and urged the government to extend new interest-free loans to farmers whose crops were damaged by frost. It also called for establishing an agricultural fund, whose revenues will be used in building dams and planting trees.

## NAF gives Tafleeh JD 330,156

TAFILEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) extended JD 330,156 in assistance to 1,064 families in Tafleeh in 1992. NAF Tafleeh Director Zeid Ma'abreh said Saturday. Mr. Ma'abreh said JD 36,300 was extended to 26 cases to help them start their own income-generating projects, and JD 2,693 were offered to 10 cases to help them buy hearing aids, glasses and wheel chairs. He said by the end of 1992 the fund had established 127 projects at a total cost of JD 173,700.

## Geography experts discuss map-making

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian-Tunisian technical committee met Saturday at the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre in Amman. The committee discussed joint production of maps and serial photography programmes. It also discussed scopes of bilateral cooperation and activating the role of the Jordanian-Tunisian Coordination Bureau which was set up by the committee. The committee's meetings will last for four days.

## Jordanian-cyclist to begin stage 5

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian traveller and cyclist Ali Al 'Utum has recently ended the fourth stage of his world tour, started at the end of 1990. The fourth stage which began Dec. 5 included Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. In the earlier stages, Mr. Utum visited Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the fifth stage of the tour will include the United States, Mexico and Canada. He said the objective of the tour is to highlight the cultural image of Jordan abroad and to familiarise himself with the life of people in other countries.

## Ministry urges quality

AMMAN (Petra) — A training seminar on quality control in the industrial sector opened Saturday at the Philadelphia Hotel in Amman.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Marwan Awad delivered an opening address stressing the importance of the industrial sector in the economic development process.

Mr. Awad said other economic sectors, which are reliant on the industrial and services sectors, lack the infrastructure needed for their development.

The industrial sector, he said, constitutes 25 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), which underlines the need to pay due attention to this sector.

This can be done by replacing imported commodities with locally-manufactured ones and encouraging Jordanian industrialists to export their commodities, Mr. Awad said.

To achieve these two goals the industrial sector should focus on quality products at reasonable prices, the secretary general said.

Mr. Awad said the Ministry of Industry and Trade is concerned with the quality of products, which prompted it to establish the Specifications and Standards Department.

He added that the ministry is planning to establish an independent directorate to look into such matters.

Director of the Specifications of Standards Department Hassan Al Saoudi delivered an address in which he said that holding the seminar was part of the activities of the Jordanian-German project for developing specifications and standards in Jordan.

Mr. Saoudi expressed hope that other courses and seminars on quality control will be held in the future.

He said the national industry has achieved progress over the past years in terms of quality and quantity. It has also managed to be competitive in the local market as well as abroad, he said.

Assir Qassar, Deputy Director of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) office in Amman, which is organising the course in cooperation with the specifications department, focused on the importance of quality control in her address.

She said the European Community Market sets certain specifications for any commodity imported from abroad.

Ms. Qassar said the significance of holding training courses in the field of industrial quality has a pivotal role in marketing commodities locally or abroad.

Participating in the six-day seminar are 30 engineers who will discuss the basic principles of quality control, statistical techniques, ways of selecting samples and other related issues.

## Exhibit focuses on Dana

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Tourism Yanal Hikmat and French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bouchard Sunday will open an exhibition of photographs and drawings by French artist Michele Bievers depicting Dana in southern Jordan.

On display at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) in Amman, the exhibition will run until the end of January.

Dr. Bievers has conducted research on Dana, which was established several centuries ago and claims a number of archaeological sites.

The village has 150 citizens who live on raising sheep and farming.

Nearby the village, is the Wildlife Reserve of Dana founded by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN).

Located in a scenic area of the Rift Valley, the reserve covers 100 square kilometres, and is one of the few areas of Jordan where a viable population of larger mammals, including the mountain gazelle, ibex and striped hyena, survive, according to the RSCN.

The RSCN is currently implementing a restoration programme at the archaeological sites of Dana, with other Jordanian organisations and Ministries in an effort to help local residents ensure an adequate income, particularly through services to tourists to the region.

Dr. Bievers has published 70 page book on her studies of the region in Arabic and French. The illustrated book will be introduced at the exhibition.

## Jordan mourns Suleiman Al Hadidi

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

SALT — One of Jordan's most prominent lawyers and a former Minister, Suleiman Al Hadidi, was laid to rest in his hometown of Salt Saturday.

Mr. Hadidi, who died Friday, of a heart attack was born in Salt in 1923. A 1944 graduate of law from Damascus University, he served in a number of government positions and held the cabinet post of minister of interior several times.

Mr. Hadidi also served as president of the Jordanian Bar Association and held the post of assistant secretary general of the Arab Lawyers Federation.

His Majesty King Hussein delegated Balqa Governor Eid Al Qatameh to attend the funeral and to offer his condolences to the Hadidi family and clan.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan delegated the director of the Balqa Police Department to convey his condolences to the Hadidi family.

Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, Speaker of the Palestine National Council Sheikh Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh and notable Jordanian personalities, together with heads of political groups and private and public organisations



Suleiman Al Hadidi in the Kingdom attended the funeral in Salt.

The secretary general of the Arab Lawyers Federation Farouk Abu Issa will arrive in Amman from Damascus Sunday, accompanied by two members of the federation's general secretariat to offer condolences to the Hadidi family.

Mr. Hadidi's death was announced Saturday in a communique from the Prime Minister's office.

## New rules for drivers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department Saturday issued a statement giving conditions for non-Jordanians residing in the Kingdom and wishing to obtain a driving licence.

Non-Jordanians can obtain such a licence provided they have a valid residence permit, a foreign driving licence or any accredited certificate from driver training school, a valid work permit, and a good conduct certificate if exempted from the residence permit, said the statement.

Any non-Jordanian investor must register his project with the concerned authorities but no work permit is needed, the statement said. This also applies to the investor's wife, it said.

The same applies to diplomatic mission provided they produce official documents from the Foreign Ministry.

Foreign experts and technicians employed by public organisations in Jordan are also exempted from the work permit condition, the statement said.

Non-Jordanian students at the universities can produce the university identity card when applying for a driving licence.

## JNYF to stage rally for Iraqis

AMMAN (J.T.) — A public march and rally will be staged Sunday afternoon by the Jordanian National Youth Federation (JNYF) in a show of solidarity with the Iraqi people.

The march which will begin from Abdali and end at Hashemieh Square near the old municipality building and the Roman amphitheatre.

A nation-wide campaign will be announced to collect supplies such as pencils and copybooks for Iraqi children. Meanwhile, organisations in Jordan continued to voice condemnation of the recent U.S.-led attacks on Iraq. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) issued a statement recently, denouncing such attacks and appealing to churches in the Middle East to support efforts towards the achievements of peace and justice.

## Gaza children to receive speech, hearing treatment

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In Gaza, 1,000 pre-school children have been identified as potentially needing special speech and hearing services.

According to Manal Hamzah, audiology consultant for the Society for the Care of the Handicapped in Gaza (SCHG), 4,000 children between the ages of 1 day and 6 years are being treated at home under the Portage programme for the development of motor skills and general abilities.

Ms. Hamzah expects that out of the 4,000 children, 300 will need intensive diagnosis, rehabilitation, audiology and special education services.

She attributes the high number of cases to poor primary health care services received by pregnant women in Gaza.

With a population of 800,000, birthrate of 4.1, and households of seven or more children, Gaza has been described by Arab-American scholar Edward Said as "an affront to humanity."

Gaza, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, has more than its share of health problems.

Houses are cold and damp, which can lead to problems of the middle ear and later to hearing disabilities. School classes are overcrowded and provide little or no visual or mental stimulation.

"A child does not go to school



Gaza's overcrowded schools can lead to speech and hearing impairments (UNRWA photo)

until the age of six. So if the child has some handicap, it will be left undetected until the late age of six," Ms. Hamzah said.

Plans for home treatment services have been drawn up in cooperation with the University of Lamar off-campus master's level training programme in audiology, speech pathology, and deaf education.

Funding for the programme has been provided by the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID). The cost of the programme is estimated at \$10 million.

teacher for every ten children; he/she will visit the children at their homes on a weekly basis.

Meanwhile, about 70 students from Gaza will benefit from the University of Lamar off-campus master's level training programme in audiology, speech pathology, and deaf education.

Funding for the programme has been provided by the U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID). The cost of the programme is estimated at \$10 million.

## UNCTAD, ESCWA open transport meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) opened a two-day meeting in Amman Saturday on multimodal transport in Western Asia.

Senior officials from governmental road transport corporations, port authorities and state-owned airlines are participating in the meeting which is being held at the ESCWA office. ESCWA executive Director Tayseer Abdel Jaber told the opening session that the transport sector constituted one of the main pillars of socio-economic development, and plays a key role in the development of other sectors.

## ILO checks needs in occupied territories

AMMAN (Petra) — The International Labour Organisation (ILO) plans to offer assistance to workers and businesses in the occupied Arab territories following a visit there shortly by an ILO team, to determine aid requirements of Palestinians under Israeli rule.

The announcement was made by ILO Assistant Director Mr. Shulji Dajani for Arab Affairs who is leading an ILO fact-finding mission the Middle East.

At a meeting with acting Minister of Labour Saad Al Sour in Amman Saturday, Mr. Dajani said the ILO director has requested more aid for Arab workers under Israeli occupation, pending a review of the workers' needs.

The acting minister spoke at length about the pitiful conditions of Arab workers in the occupied territories.

Outlining the Israeli authorities arbitrary measures, the minister said the magnetic card system issued to Arab workers restricts their movement.

The long curfews imposed on refugee camps and towns, bans on marketing Arab farmers produce and other measures are causing a great deal of suffering to the local population, the minister said.

He added that heavy taxes including the departure tax, are increasing the burdens on Arab businesses and workers at a time when the occupied territories are witnessing increased unemployment.

Mr. Sour urged the ILO to work out a timetable for the implementation of its own resolutions passed in 1974 and 1980 and to provide all possible economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people.

## Embassy Of India Amman Republic Day of India

On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held on Tuesday, January 26, 1993, at 10 a.m. at the premises of the Embassy of India, First Circle, Jabal Amman (Opp. Malhas Hospital). All Indians with their family members are cordially invited to attend the function.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

## EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Latin American Countries in France" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Dhans, a Village from South Jordan" displaying photos and other items on the village at the Royal Cultural Centre.

## Israelis bomb Lebanese villages

(Continued from page 1)

its Friday editions.

"The kidnapping of foreign nationals and hijacking of aircraft are something of the past," Mr. Hariri told the newspaper, in a reference to incidents of lawlessness which had plagued his country.

Mr. Hariri said he hoped the new U.S. administration of President Bill Clinton would lift a seven-year-old ban on the travel of U.S. citizens to Lebanon and on flights to New York by Lebanon's national airline.

"These American measures are

hurting Lebanon as our country embarks on an era of peace and reconstruction," he said.

Mr. Hariri said Lebanon was ready to conclude a peace treaty with Israel, but made a treaty conditional on similar pacts reached by other Arab countries involved in the Middle East peace talks.

"We and our Arab colleagues entered the peace talks together, and whatever decision that needs to be taken on the matter we will take together," Mr. Hariri told the newspaper.

## 17 expellees flown to Haifa

(Continued from page 1)

clothes from the Red Cross," Dr. Rantisi said after meeting with the ICRC officials immediately after their arrival.

"We will remain demanding the immediate implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799," he said.

Resolution 799 condemns Israel for expelling the Palestinians and demands it take them back immediately.

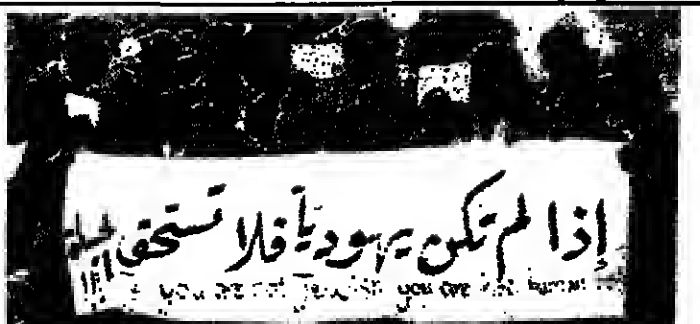
Most countries have condemned the expulsions and Palestinian resume the talks until the evictees come home.

Israel says the men were linked to two fundamentalist Islamic groups behind attacks on its soldiers.

"Although we harbour the highest esteem and respect for the Red Cross, we have refused to admit the delegation into the camp," said Dr. Rantisi.

"We smell a conspiracy to transform our cause into a humanitarian issue to abort Resolution 799," he added.

Dr. Rantisi said the ICRC de-



Palestinian expellees hold a banner reading "If you are not Jewish you are not human being" Friday during a march they staged to a Lebanese army line to present petitions to the world community to pressure Israel into allowing their return to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

legation carried letters from the families to the evictees, "which we have received but do not intend to answer. We also refused to accept the medical supplies."

Despite the delegates' exclusion from the camp, formalities proceeded smoothly.

Dr. Rantisi called the names of the sick through a bullhorn, asking them to report to one of the roadside centres to be examined by Red Cross physician Cordula Wolfberg. The sick men were driven to the site in news reporters' cars.

The mistakenly expelled men

walked to the other centre for interviews with the delegates.

When the time came for them to leave, the 17 men hugged their friends and took letters back home for their families.

In their excitement, they shoved each other to get on the helicopters.

"Don't push each other, be calm," shouted Dr. Rantisi through a bullhorn.

The six-hour visit was the first to freezing camp by the international organisation for two weeks.

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## Jordan Times

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## Doing it right

THE PALESTINIANS seem poised to forsake the next round of peace talks with Israel on account of Israel's continued defiance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 which calls on Israel to reverse its expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians. This is an understandable position in view of the gravity of the situation surrounding the helpless Palestinians stranded in no-man's land for more than five weeks now. Yet abandoning the bilateral peace talks at this stage may not be the answer, neither for the plight of the affected Palestinian individuals nor for the Palestinian conflict itself. Given the fact that Arab and international geopolitical considerations have effectively deprived the Palestinians in particular of any military options to resolve their case, it would seem self-defeating from the Palestinian point of view to withdraw from the only available avenue left to them to retrieve at least some of their national rights. To pin exaggerated hopes only on escalating the intifada as a way to drive Israel out of the occupied Arab territories is wrong. The entire Arab World, it must be remembered, has opted for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict including the Palestinian question out of bitter experiences with past military efforts to realise a total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. So to abandon the peace process now, when there is also near-universal support for it, would be self-defeating. It is one thing to press hard for the repatriation of the expelled Palestinians by all available means, but to put on hold the entire peace effort may not achieve the desired results including the return of the Palestinians. It so happens that the Arab side has engaged in the peace process more seriously than Israel has done. To suspend the negotiations at this juncture would therefore play into the hands of the extremists in Israel who would want nothing more than the miscarriage of the peace efforts under international pressure.

This does not of course mean that the issue of the expellees will have to be abandoned or forgotten before the talks are resumed in Washington or anywhere else. It simply means that every effort should be made to solve it right away.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Saturday drew attention to a request submitted by Israel to the Clinton administration asking that it use its influence to postpone a Security Council debate on the question of the Palestinian evacuees until the Israeli Supreme Court has reached a decision on the matter. This development clearly reflects Israel's deep desire to freeze Resolution 799 and prevent the council from forcing it to return the Palestinians to their homeland, said the paper. It is worthy to note here that Israel must implement the resolution regardless of the decision taken by its own supreme court simply because it was ordered to do so by the world community which regarded the act of deportation as violating international rules, the paper said. The Clinton administration is therefore called on to ignore this request and is urged to take speedy measures to implement the council resolution because any delay in the matter would encourage the Israelis to continue their atrocities against the Palestinians and violate world rules and regulations, the paper added. It said that Washington is invited to utilise its influence with Tel Aviv to respond favourably to the Security Council resolution and return the evacuees who have suffered a great deal due to Israel's arrogance and inhuman practices. Israel's continued flouting of U.N. resolutions and its mutiny against international rules, said the paper, can only place the new administration face to face with a critical test. The paper said no one expects the Clinton administration to individually force Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, but at least one expects Washington not to impede the council from taking measures to force the Jewish state to abide by world resolutions.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dstour daily Saturday discussed President Clinton's speech in which he made it clear that Washington was now turning its attention to stem the power of Islamic fundamentalism now that the world has disposed of communism. Saleh Al Qallab said that Mr. Clinton, who is a Democrat, is bound to turn his attention to Iran, which conspired to bring about the downfall of former Democrat President Jimmy Carter and to launch aggression on that country. The best ally for the United States in this concern, said the writer, is Israel which is seeking continued western support for its policies and atrocities against the Arabs and the Palestinians. He said that it was in order to achieve Washington's ends that Israel recently deported 400 Hamas activists to southern Lebanon hoping to win the western nations' backing for its endeavour to perpetuate its occupation of Palestine. But the Rabin government, faced with an unexpected anger from western countries over this matter, is now trying to back down and reach a compromise over this issue, the writer said. However, he said, the Israelis are still in the game of stemming the so-called danger of Islamic fundamentalism and could launch a raid on Iranian nuclear plants, as it did in Iraq, to please the West and win further U.S. support.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

# Higher cash reserve required

Changing the rate of cash reserves which the banks are required to maintain with the central bank is one of the established instruments of monetary policy. In the case of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) this instrument is the most effective and potent tool available to the central bank. Changing the rediscount rate is meaningless when banks are too liquid to need to borrow from the central bank, while open market operations, on the other hand, are almost non-existent in Jordan in the absence of a big and active secondary market of financial instruments.

The central bank is authorised, by law, to dictate the rate of cash reserves, i.e., the portion of deposits that must be set aside with the central bank, without interest, provided this portion does not exceed 35 per cent.

The CBJ lowered the ratio of compulsory cash reserves in the past years when banks were starving for liquidity. The liquidity of the banks soared now to unprecedented high levels. Banks maintain huge cash balances with the central bank in excess of the compulsory reserves, therefore the central bank found it necessary to raise the ratio from 13 per cent to 15 per cent in order to siphon part of the excess liquidity and as precaution against possible inflationary pressures. At this time, when the Jordanian economy is close to being overheated, the precautions against renewed inflation are justified. Under the circumstances, the

central bank must adopt a tighter monetary policy, which it did. Naturally, the CBJ's action drew some sharp criticism from the banking sector, which the press echoed. This criticism is of course worth examining.

At the outset, we claim that the private sector and the business circles will not be negatively affected by the new measure. The remaining liquidity in the banking system, after raising the required cash reserves, is still more than sufficient to accommodate comfortably all the legitimate demand of the business sector at the current interest rate on credit. Investors still find it in their best interest to use their own capital, rather than to borrow from the banking system at 11 per cent per annum, especially if their capital is kept in dollars, either within the country or abroad.

It is worth mentioning here that the compulsory cash reserve ratio on deposits of foreign exchange was 35 per cent for four years. However, the central bank accepted to pay the going interest rate on the reserve in foreign exchange while no interest is payable on the 15 per cent reserve in local currency.

The margin of interest, i.e., the difference of interest, of 5.5 per cent, payable to depositors and the interest chargeable to borrowers of 11 per cent, is relatively wide. It secures high profitability in favour of the banks. The central bank measure will

effectively absorb part of this windfall in favour of the treasury, to which the central bank pays its own profits. It remains to be seen whether the banks will be able to shift this indirect tax to the public or if it will be borne by the banks themselves. We are inclined to expect the latter, because interest rates on deposits and loans were independently determined by the market.

A compulsory cash reserve of 15 per cent has the effect of raising the cost of deposits from 5.5 per cent payable to the depositors to 6.5 per cent, because the bank pays interest on the entire deposit while it is unable to invest more than 85 per cent of the funds under the best circumstances.

During 1992, the central bank imposed a ceiling on the growth of credit of 8.5 per cent. At the time, critics argued that the ceiling will suppress new investments. With 1992 ended, we find that despite the economic boom, the private sector did not utilise more than 65 per cent of the allowed quota.

The ceiling of credit for 1993 will be JD400 million. We believe that that ceiling is actually higher than the real needs for credit. The credit ceiling, like the hiking of cash reserve ratio, will not prevent qualified borrowers from obtaining sufficient credit, but they will send a signal to the market that inflation is not to be expected.

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

# Is Gaza worth the anguish?

By David Hoffman

KHAN YOUNIS — Occupied Gaza Strip — Israeli army jeeps with loudspeakers roared through the rutted streets in the occupied Gaza Strip, announcing that the curfew would be lifted for just two hours, but only women could leave their houses to shop for food.

Tharwar Abu Tyour, an unemployed car mechanic, sent one of his daughters, Rana, out to get fresh milk from a farmer, he and neighbours said. He gave her 1 shekel and a pitcher.

The 10-year-old girl walked through an orange grove and up a side street. When she started to cross a boulevard, she was shot and killed by two bullets fired by Israeli soldiers, witnesses recounted. According to a hospital report, the shots ripped through her back.

Rizeq Fara, 19, looked out from his house and saw that the girl had been hit. He shouted to neighbours to get her family, witnesses said. Soon, Rizeq, too, was shot and killed on his balcony by an Israeli soldier, the witnesses said. The hospital report said the bullet hit him in the head.

The deaths came in a maelstrom of anger, fear, and fatal miscalculations that erupted in Khan Younis Saturday, Dec. 19. Four other Palestinians were killed that day and four more died during the next three days in a surge of violence following Israel's mass deportation of 415 suspected Islamic activists to Lebanon.

The story of the Khan Younis deaths runs deeper than just another clash between Palestinians and the Israeli army. A reconstruction of the events, based on Palestinian witnesses and Israeli soldiers, offers a revealing glimpse of how quickly the violence was ignited and resulted in the killings and lasting bitterness.

The Khan Younis riot also underscores how, after five years of fighting the Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against Israeli occupation, the army is still caught in the grips of a painful no-win war. With each death — and particularly after the recent fatal ambush of three Israeli soldiers — influential voices in Israel are asking whether the occupation of the Gaza Strip is worth the anguish.

For Palestinians, too, December was a cruel month. Of the 23 Palestinians killed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, eight were under 16 years old. It was the highest monthly death toll in the occupied territories in more than two years.

After watching year-end programmes on Israeli television, Fara's father asked, "Why didn't they say, in 1992, there was a massacre in Khan Younis?" He said no one from the army has come to tell him that a mistake had been made.

"I was never in jail" and always kept out of Palestinian politics, he said. "But now, how can I

look at an Israeli after the death of my girl?"

Israeli soldiers, for their part, say they feel defenseless and in a no-win situation while on duty in Gaza. Without solving the deeper economic and social problems of Gaza, 40 soldiers warned in a recent letter to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, "there is a process of Lebanonisation — turning to the extreme and loss of control."

Especially in the southernmost towns and refugee camps like Khan Younis and Rafah, Gaza is daily transformed into a war zone, the place where Israeli soldiers most fear to tread. Violent gangs named the Fateh Hawks and Red Eagles rule the streets there, and barefoot boys play with makeshift weapons and toy guns.

Many of the most jolting terrorist attacks against Israelis and most severe clashes with soldiers occur in Gaza or originate there. A large number of the suspected activists deported over a month ago came from Gaza, a wind-swept seaside strip that is home to 780,000 Palestinians, many of them refugees.

According to military officials, the nature of the conflict in Gaza has changed markedly in the last year. They say that the armed gangs have grown stronger, more experienced, and better equipped.

Israeli military commanders now see their role in Gaza not as confronting the mass demonstrations of the intifada's early days, but as grinding and dangerous combat against the relatively small number of armed fugitives.

Rana and Fara were not throwing stones or carrying guns, and the soldiers did not shout warn-

ings before firing the fatal shots, Palestinian witnesses said.

The army has said nothing publicly, but in an interview, an army officer acknowledged that Rana's death was a mistake. The officer, along with others in the army interviewed for this story, spoke on condition that he not be identified. He said the army lacked solid information about the death of Fara apparently because soldiers' recollections after the episode were inconclusive.

Palestinian witnesses said the soldiers in Khan Younis at that period fired large amounts of ammunition, sometimes at random. A soldier who was there described the atmosphere as "simple hysteria," and he said Rana was killed in a burst of more than 50 bullets.

When the Dec. 19 riot broke out, military commanders were surprised by the pent-up fury of the Palestinians at the deportations, army officials said. They were relying on a large deployment of reinforcements who had been sent to Gaza earlier in the month with little experience in the densely populated shantytowns. All the troops felt under siege from big, angry crowds throwing rocks, iron bars, and bottles — and some of them carrying weapons — the officials said.

The army was taken aback when hundreds of residents poured into the streets of Khan Younis — including men and children — when the curfew was briefly lifted for the first time in six days. "We saw that all the (refugee) camp and most of the population jumped out and filled up all the streets with all kinds of crowds and kids and boys," the

army officer said. "Most of the population was out and in part of the area there were armed guys who took part. ... All the population came out with their angry faces; ready to clash with the army. I was there. It was real different from other times."

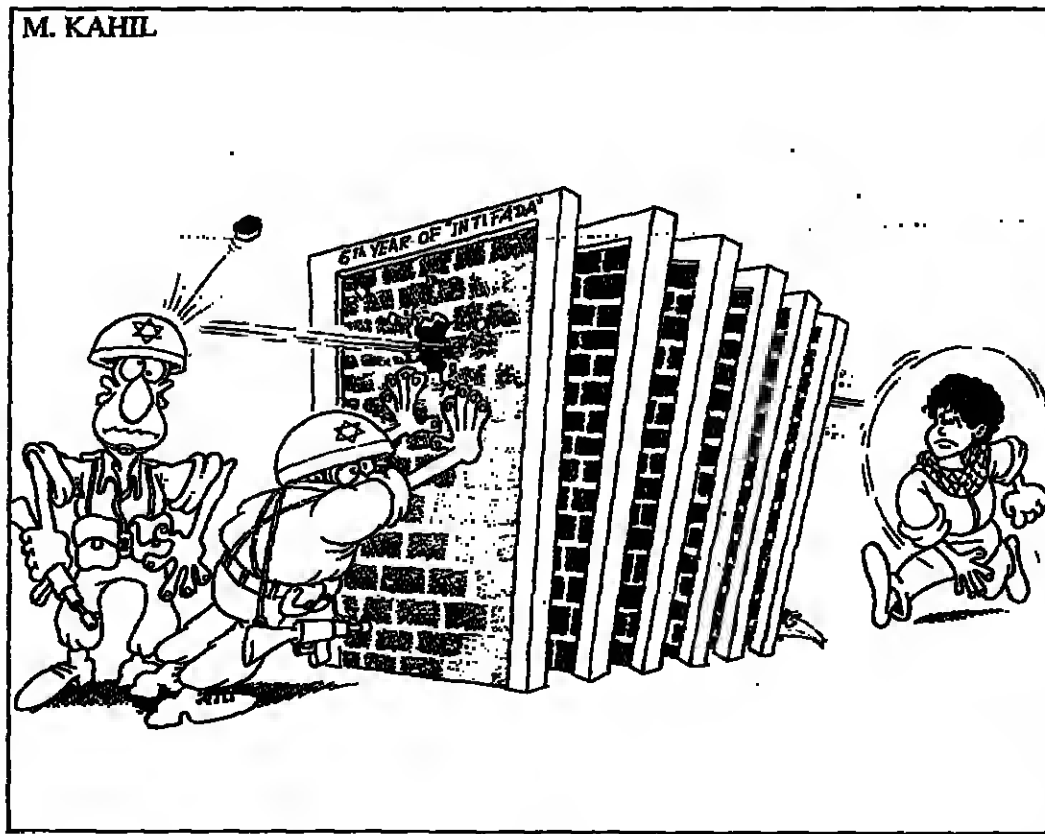
Israeli army rules say soldiers may shoot if they feel their lives, or those of colleagues, are in immediate danger. Otherwise, they may shoot in the legs to wound a suspect while trying to apprehend him, but only after issuing a series of warnings.

Rana was shot from a block away, according to two witnesses from the neighbourhood. They said they could not help her immediately because shooting continued. Eventually, she was taken to the hospital and pronounced dead on arrival.

A soldier who was in Khan Younis said he agreed with an unidentified soldier's description in the daily newspaper Haaretz of the situation as chaotic, and added: "In this specific incident, we shot 50 bullets, and I am only talking about the incident in which the girl was killed."

"I have no idea" how she was killed, he said. "I am going crazy from this. Simply crazy. We shot an enormous amount. Lestimate that it was soldiers' hysteria — simple hysteria. I am sure that he did not shoot at the girl. He simply shot, and she got hit. The girl was not standing next to someone armed, or anything like that."

"No one can shake the feeling that she and others were killed because of us. Don't think that it is easy for us to live with this" — The Washington Post.



# Isolated Shiites face increased dangers

By Charles Richards

THE SHITES in southern Iraq, whom Washington says are protected by the allied no-fly zone, are facing a worsening plight on several fronts. Increased repression by President Saddam Hussein's regime, the worsening economic situation, and a rift within the Iraqi National Congress (INC) umbrella organisation of opposition groups, have left the Shiites feeling more and more isolated.

Shiite dissidents based in London say that the allied no-fly zone has successfully reduced the military operations against the Shiites, but the Iraqi authorities have over the past two months begun a purge of dissident elements. They

have made selective arrests of people associated with the uprising in March and April 1991, noticeably in the towns of Najaf, Al Anbar and Basra. And they have set up roadblocks and instituted other searches as the security apparatus consolidates its hold, according to Shiite dissidents.

As a result, "it is unlikely that the south will rise up against Saddam Hussein," said Laith Kubba, a leading Shiite intellectual. Others report a carrot and stick approach, with Baghdad offering gifts and bribes to loyal tribes.

At the same time, the population is suffering from lack of

food. Those in the marshes — a small minority of the Shiites in the south — do not even receive the government rations. There is unease among the Shiites that they did not get the kind of aid provided to the Kurds in the north under the Provide Comfort programme. Many feel the outside world in its obsession with military strikes and finding ways to unseat President Saddam does not care for their uprising and the broader humanitarian issues.

On a political level, the feeling of victimisation is one reason why the Shiites, with the exception of Sheikh Bahr Al Oluim, have in effect withdrawn from the Executive Council of the INC. Their

differences are both personal and substantial. Many in the Iraqi opposition, both outside the Iraqi National Congress, and inside, oppose the prominent role played by Ahmed Chalabi, the chairman of the executive committee. Criticism of Mr. Chalabi is mainly on a personal level, because of his past financial dealings, but it also contains differences in substance. One Sunni nationalist, Abdul Sitar Ed-Duri, resigned from the INC executive committee.

Laith Kubba's concerns are with policy more than personalities. "My deepest worry is the politicisation of the ethnic differences, of insisting on percentages

and quotas. Basically the INC went too far in seeking political federation for the Kurds, not administrative federation." That is, by insisting that the three-man presidency council should have one Kurd (Masoud Barzani), one Shiite (Sayyed Mohammad Bahr Al Oluim), one Sunni (General Hassan Naqub), the INC is reinforcing the sectarian differences of Iraqis rather than overcoming them. Not only Shiites claim to be active in promoting dissent in the south. Mr. Sabah Kadhim, a spokesman for General Naqub, said that his group, the independent Iraqi Alliance, had recruited army officers who had defected in

the south. According to Mr. Kadhim, the United States is still targeting the south as the place where pressure would be brought to bear on President Saddam. "Washington is working on a covert operation, sending people inside, and getting information specifically on army commanders. Their plan is to destroy military facilities in the south, in order to prevent the army from stopping the uprising," he said. Such an assertion of an uprising in progress is at odds with the more gloomy assessment by the Shiite groups — The Independent.



## U.N. team reports Iraqi cooperation

(Continued from page 1)

Clinton to pursue aggressive actions against Iraq. Babel, published and owned by President Saddam's son, Uday, carried the open letter on page two.

It was the first time any Iraqi newspaper had directly commented on Mr. Clinton and Iraq's inauguration day ceasefire and offer of talks on the northern and southern and the two-and-a-half-year-old U.N. trade blockade.

"So far, there has been no response from the American side three days after Iraq's peaceful initiative. Therefore the gunpowder keg remains liable to explode any time," Mr. Aref wrote.

His remarks followed attacks by U.S. planes on Thursday and Friday on alleged anti-aircraft missile sites in the "no-fly" zone set up in the north.

"Was the assault a test by Washington to see how far Iraq was committed to its (ceasefire) decision? Undoubtedly, testing actions are not conducted by playing with fire," he wrote.

Mr. Aref said that if Mr. Clinton was seeking "to put his house in order he would not talk and behave like his predecessor (Bush) in the world and use the same terms against others."

Government newspapers have so far refrained from comment on Mr. Clinton's remarks that there would be no change in U.S. policy towards Iraq under his administration, but Mr. Aref said:

"Clinton is still, until this moment, against Iraq's right of sovereignty over its airspace and land. Interpreting Security Council resolutions away from reality and insists on keeping prohibited zones in the north and south of the country."

The army newspaper, Al Qadisiyah, in its own signed commentary, said Mr. Clinton's "contradictory policies" towards Iraq implied "the continuation of the same old path of U.S. foreign policy."

"Within this context Clinton will not escape the curse of the arrogant American presidency," columnist Hussein Al Obeidi wrote.

The United States and its Gulf allies launched missile and air strikes against Iraq Jan. 13, accusing Baghdad of flouting the Security Council's ceasefire resolution.

The attacks, spread over four days, killed at least 46 people, including two women who died when a cruise missile smashed the lobby of Baghdad's leading hotel, Al Rashid.

Iraq insists it is abiding by the U.N. resolutions but says they do not cover the "no-fly" zones.

After a U.S. F-16 shot down an Iraqi MiG in the south on Dec. 27 it moved surface-to-air missiles into the zone and vowed to fight to win back control of its airspace.

Just before Mr. Clinton moved into the White House Wednesday it offered talks to resolve the problem.

After the first attack Thursday, it said it stood by the ceasefire declaration. It described the reasons for Friday's attack as fabricated and made no mention of the ceasefire.

U.S. officials said that in both incidents Iraqi air defence batteries had not switched on such radar since its ceasefire came into force Wednesday.

Iraqi military officers said they wanted peace.

"We have received orders not to open fire on any plane. We hope that the Americans can

understand and respond to this initiative," base commander Col. oneil Abed Ilah Danoun told reporters at the site of Thursday's air strike.

Planes too high to identify roared over a wheat field littered with craters and shrapnel from cluster bombs dropped on what Washington said was a missile battery site.

Col. Danoun said the nearest missile battery was 30 kilometres away from the bombed site of Bakheera, 12 kilometres south of Mosul, and their radars had not been activated.

The Iraqi officers, asked about Thursday's attack, said they had not locked their radar on any U.S. and allied planes patrolling the northern and southern "no-fly" zones since the ceasefire began Wednesday.

"The American pilots are our brothers — we don't think brothers should attack brothers," General Sameer Mohammad Nadhir, a MiG pilot, told reporters.

In Baghdad, the Foreign Ministry called the attack a provocation but made no mention of the ceasefire.

"Today's incident is nothing but a fabricated incident aimed at provocation," a statement said. Denying suggestions that Friday's attack was triggered by an Iraqi missile battery locked on to a U.S. plane, it said Iraq had no air defence batteries east of Mosul.

Al Jumhuriyah, in a front-page editorial, blamed remnants of the Bush administration for the latest air strikes.

"There are elements of the remnants of the criminal Bush administration at the centre of responsibility in the American Defence Department and the Central Intelligence Agency," it said.

"They are working in an obvious manner to push the new American administration to take aggressive steps against Iraq."

Under the banner headline "beware of Bush's Remnants" Al Jumhuriyah said they were hiding facts about Iraq's attitude from Mr. Clinton.

Al Jumhuriyah also said Saturday that fear of Iraq would haunt Kuwait's ruling family ceaselessly until it abdicated or were overthrown after oil runs out.

The editorial in Al Jumhuriyah echoed a speech by President Saddam Monday in which he derided Kuwaiti rulers for imposing a "new colonialism" on the emirate.

Under the terms of the 1991 ceasefire, Iraq is required to give up its claim to Kuwait. But it has renewed it several times since and has made arms-gathering forays across the border.

"Regardless of its attempts to possess the constituent parts of a modern state and to buy off foreign news media, the Kuwaiti regime will remain smaller than a mosquito and dirtier than dirt itself in the eyes of Iraqis," the newspaper wrote.

"Fear of the Iraqis will continue to pursue their generation after generation until they throw themselves in the sea to get rid of it, or until our honorable brothers in our dear Kuwait stamp them underfoot," the newspaper said.

It said that when Kuwait runs out of oil — not expected until the middle of next century, according to current estimates — the United States, Britain and France would "turn away from Kuwait's rulers, and the Kuwaiti regime will then appear as it really is."

## American Muslim women educate community about Islam

By Rosalind Mandine Murphy

WASHINGTON — American Muslim women have joined together in a new organisation to help educate the American public about Islam and put an end to the stereotyping of Muslims in the United States.

The organisation, the North American Council for Muslim Women (NACMW), which was founded in February 1992, now has 280 members throughout North America and associate members in other countries.

According to its president, Sharifa Alkhateeb, Muslim women are often misrepresented in the western media. NACMW is "trying to turn that around" by contacting media, providing speakers for conferences and workshops, and establishing itself as a resource of information of Islam and Muslim women. Ms. Alkhateeb said.

Ms. Alkhateeb said that even though NACMW's membership is still growing, its reach is wide "because each one of our women is connected to at least four other organisations."

Ms. Alkhateeb has a master's degree in comparative religions and has worked as a journalist, a

teacher of English as a second language and as managing editor of a social science journal.

Explaining NACMW's goals, Ms. Alkhateeb said: "We are basically educated women who want to reexamine the way in which women are regarded; the way in which women are understood; and the possibilities that are available to women based on people's interpretation of the basic (Islamic) texts."

"We want to develop ideas that are based on the Koran and Hadith" and will allow a Muslim woman "to live a serious Muslim life anywhere in the world and still have all of her self-respect, her self-confidence, and her ability to manage her life," Ms. Alkhateeb stressed.

Working to end the stereotyping of Muslim women is an important way of attaining these goals, she said. Members of NACMW make themselves available for interviews, as speakers, and as resources for information to help set the record straight on Muslim women. Members of NACMW have also met with newspaper editors to "give them information, explain what our point of view is and ask them to be more sensitive," Ms.

Alkhateeb noted.

In July, Wanda Khan, publicity chairman for NACMW, organised a mass demonstration in response to an article published in the Charlotte Observer in North Carolina, entitled "Women of the Veil." NACMW viewed the article as "prejudicial," and Ms. Khan discussed these views in a television interview in Charlotte.

An issue of great importance to American Muslim women is the acceptance of women who wish to cover their heads in the workplace, Ms. Alkhateeb said. While most women who cover are accepted, there are still problems, she said.

"Those who choose to cover their hair, very often are discriminated against in the workplace," Ms. Alkhateeb said, citing several cases in which Muslim women have been fired from their jobs "because of their covering."

"We are trying to seek acceptance of us as human beings no matter how we choose to dress," Ms. Alkhateeb said. She noted that NACMW is hoping to meet with Hillary Clinton on this and other issues of concern. "We would like to make her aware of

some of the issues affecting Muslim women," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

Dealing with social service agencies presents another challenge to many immigrant Muslim women, about half of Muslim women are immigrants, Ms. Alkhateeb said. These agencies do not have Muslims or people from Middle Eastern backgrounds on their staffs, and this presents a problem not only in communication but also in establishing trust, she explained.

Through seminars and workshops, NACMW is working to get more people who are of Middle Eastern background or Muslims hired at these agencies and to train social service employees "to be more knowledgeable about people from the Middle East and about Islam," Ms. Alkhateeb pointed out.

In addition, NACMW is producing a series of pamphlets on health-care, sickness and healing, interpersonal relations and "body language." By outlining effective ways to serve Muslim immigrants, the pamphlets are "not only helpful to Muslims, but also to social service agencies," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW members also work

to educate Americans about Muslim women by getting involved in their communities, attending conferences, and reaching out to scholars and other organisations.

"We very much encourage our members to be involved in their local school systems, on committees, offering their services as volunteers. Just by being involved...will dispel a lot of myths," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW reaches out to professors who teach courses on women "so that they will be aware of a different way of thinking about Islam and Muslim women and their role," Ms. Alkhateeb said. Noting the growing success of these efforts, she said, "People are beginning to ask us to be involved and ask our opinions about things. Every now and then we will get a call from a university, checking information to see whether or not it is accurate."

NACMW members also establish contacts by attending women's and Muslim conferences and events throughout North America. "We give people copies of (NACMW) newsletters, we talk to them about our ideas and our organisation. If we know a major conference is going on we

send people there and, if possible, we try to become one of the panelists," Ms. Alkhateeb said.

NACMW members have attended and spoken at many recent conferences, including the Islamic Coordinating Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana; the first Annual Muslim Women's conference in Richmond, Virginia; Roots Palestinian Youth Organisation Second Annual Convention in Washington, D.C.; the Dialogue on Diversity at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; and the New England Muslim Sister Association in Hartford, Connecticut. NACMW held its first conference last March at George Mason University in Virginia and plans a general conference for February to be held in Oakland, California.

Another important element to NACMW's work is "reaching out to men as well and trying to involve them in the process of thinking through with us a new outlook for women," Ms. Alkhateeb said. "If we want to have any kind of successful rethinking of what women can or cannot do — it has to be a joint effort," she stressed — United States Information Agency.

## Saucy scoops fail to cure weak circulation

By Michael Leapman

THE PRESS is supposed to be a mirror of society, so it is appropriate that the national newspapers should, like nearly everyone else, have had a rotten year and be looking forward to a worse one. Even the voluminous chronicling of disasters in other quarters — the royal family, the government, the Balkans — has failed to halt the long-term decline in newspaper sales.

The unrestrained tabloid coverage of the first two of those subjects has made it almost certain that there will be powerful pressure this year for legislation to curb perceived excesses. And the recession has meant an ever-deeper slump in advertising revenue.

The most recent figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations, covering the six months to Nov. 30, tell a depressing tale, particularly for the mass-circulation tabloids: Between them, the Sun, Star and Daily Mirror (with the Glasgow Daily Record), were down by 274,661 copies a day, compared with the same period a year earlier — a drop of 3.4 per cent.

On Sundays, the mass-market picture is even bleaker. The News of the World, Sunday Mirror and People dropped by 430,657 copies between them, a 4.3 per cent fall.

When critics accuse the press of dabbling in sensationalism to increase sales, they might reflect that this aim, whether defensible or not, is not always realised. A particularly saucy scoop, such as the Daily Mirror's discovery of taped conversations between the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker-Bowles, may result in increased sales for a day or two, but unless the higher circulation is sustained — and it seldom is — it does not translate into extra advertising revenue.

The papers facing the greatest and most painful changes are those of the Mirror Group, still in the hands of the official receiver after Robert Maxwell's death more than a year ago. Since David Montgomery, former editor of the News of the World and Today, was appointed chief executive, there have been many changes, including the loss of scores of casual jobs.

Two of the group's three papers already have new editors. Richard Stott was never likely to stay long at the Daily Mirror after trying to lead his own management buyout. It is too early to tell whether his successor, David Banks, will be able to grab Sun readers by an apparent strategy of moving the paper marginally down-market.

Bill Hagerty's departure from

the People can be put down to its year-on-year circulation fall of 7.2 per cent, the worst performance of any national paper except the desperate Sunday Sport. It was, though, surprising that he should "succeed by Bridget Rowe, whose tenure at the Sunday Mirror was marked by a year-on-year fall of 4.3 per cent.

In contrast, the middle-market tabloids have had a good year. There have been strong performances from the Daily Mail, up 3.2 per cent, and, in particular, Today, up 15.4 per cent, although still by far the weakest tabloid with a circulation of 539,284.

The Mail on Sunday also did well, but not as well as its chief rival. The Sunday Express, which switched in July from broadsheet to tabloid under its new editor, Eve Pollard, has cut the Mail on Sunday's lead to 218,845. The Mail on Sunday enjoyed an exceptionally strong November, however, increasing its weekly circulation by 73,962 in a month when the Sunday Express's circulation fell by 25,261.

The year has been mixed for the broadsheet papers: They have done well on Sundays but poorly during the week. The total market for quality dailies has contracted by 29,329 year on year, or 1.16 per cent. The Daily Telegraph and the Times fared worse,

down 2 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively, although the Telegraph remains a long way ahead of its three rivals, with sales of 1,038,792.

The Guardian's introduction of a tabloid second section every day, and a revamped Weekend section on Saturdays, has been well received, defending the paper's circulation from the erosion affecting all its rivals except the Financial Times. At the Independent, work on the daily paper's first significant redesign since its launch in 1986 is at an advanced stage.

The Times's circulation has not responded to changes made by its new editor, Peter Stothard. A plan to relaunch the Saturday Review on glossy paper with a content less like a Sunday supplement and more like the Independent's Saturday magazine has been postponed.

On Sundays the broadsheet picture is rosier, with a net increase of 57,080 copies. The only one of the four competing titles not to share in this gain is the Observer, down 42 per cent despite an expensive relaunch of its colour magazine. Nude pictures of Madonna, published in the second week of the relaunch, won many extra readers, but they did not remain with the paper.

Best performer of the Sunday quality quartet was the Independent on Sunday, up 7.7 per cent, although still with the lowest circulation of the four at 404,534. The Sunday Times, at 1,195,227, remains dominant, with a 3.9 per cent gain partly attributable to its serialisation of Andrew Morton's book on the Princess of Wales.

The explanation for the slow drift of readers away from the mass-market tabloids could be their increasing stridence and intrusiveness in reporting scandals involving politicians and the royal family. With their circulation base dwindling, the papers vie to provide ever-more-bystical revelations. This appears to alienate more readers, making the market still more competitive.

At the end of its second year, the Press Complaints Commission has given a confident account of itself to Sir David Calcutt, who will deliver to the government his second set of recommendations on preventing press intrusion into privacy. The commission's self-satisfied view was not endorsed by most of those giving evidence in the past few weeks to the Commons committee looking at the Labour MP Clive Soley's Press Freedom and Responsibility Bill.

Senior press executives believe Sir David will recommend legislation to ban the use of secret recording devices and long-lens cameras on private property — as he has suggested before — and perhaps the establishment of a press authority with statutory powers. The government ignored his earlier recommendation, but recent lobby leaks suggest they might feel obliged to act this time, especially as the Conservative papers have become less loyal allies since the general election.

Such restrictions — although loudly opposed by editors on principle — would be unlikely to affect the papers' commercial future as much as changes in the economy would. An end to the recession would increase advertising revenue and help pay for promotion to increase circulation.

So when the papers aim editorial darts at the chancellor of the exchequer they are driven by that most potent of motivators — self-interest. Until the green shoots of recovery burst into flower there will be no return to the expansive mood of the late eighties and no return to prosperity in the print — The Independent.

## Senate endorses 1993 draft budget

(Continued from page 1)

Others fields tackled in the committee's report included the agriculture sector, roads, national security and public administration.

The committee expressed regret that successive governments' decisions and plans to promote the agriculture sector ended in failure. The successive governments gave many promises to develop the sector and funds were spent on drilling artesian wells and building dams or constructing irrigation canals, but the results fell far short of meeting the country's aspirations, the report said.

Following an open debate on the report, Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh addressed the Senate, clarifying a number of points raised by Senators but giving conflicting figures about the unemployment in Jordan.

In the minister's view, only 100,000 Jordanians are considered unemployed in accordance with the initial results of a general survey conducted in 1991 by the department of statistics.

The survey, which covered 50,000 families, showed that the Jordanian work force stood at 876,000 and that the rate of unemployment stood at 18 per cent in 1991, rising by three per cent in

1992. Referring to poverty, the minister said that according to the survey only less than two per cent of families in urban regions have a monthly income less than JD 50, that 11 per cent of the population's income reaches up to JD 99 and that 19 per cent receive up to JD 149 in monthly income.

Mr. Jaradneh said that 19 per cent of the people receive up to JD 99 a month in the rural regions and that 28 per cent receive up to JD 149.

The minister said that these figures do not reflect the estimates included in the committee's report which stated that between 40 and 50 per cent of the population live under or around the poverty line.

However, he noted, the government was exerting tremendous efforts to deal with pockets of poverty. The National Aid Fund's capital for this year has risen to JD 13 million to be distributed to the needy families, which also receive subsidised basic foodstuffs, he said.

Referring to the volume of investments, the ministers noted that in 1992 investments reached 27 per cent in terms of gross domestic product, up from 22 per cent in 1991.

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## CIS leaders sign new charter; Ukraine wants to wait and see

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Russia and six other former Soviet republics left a reluctant Ukraine behind and forged a new Commonwealth that strengthens economic ties but weakens military and political links.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk Friday declared that Ukraine remains a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, but said it was too soon to sign the new Commonwealth charter. Ukraine, along with Russia and Belarus, founded the Commonwealth as the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991.

"The Commonwealth keeps on working and we are all part of the Commonwealth," Mr. Kravchuk said during a news conference with his fellow leaders in the Belarussian capital.

The leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia signed the new charter. Moldova and Turkmenistan also refused to sign.

During the summit, Russia and Ukraine also apparently failed to resolve differences over how to control the 176 long-range nuclear missiles based on Ukrainian soil.

Ukrainian lawmakers have objected to closer Commonwealth ties, fearing the former republic's long-sought independence would

be imperiled and the country would again be under Russia's domination.

Turkmenistan expressed concern that the new charter would threaten its sovereignty. The reason for Moldova's refusal to sign the document was not immediately clear.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin expressed hope that Ukraine and the other holdouts would eventually sign.

"The decision to sign the charter is open at any time to any head of state," Mr. Yeltsin told reporters. "The state that is not prepared or needs time...can do this and in a month or two months can join the charter."

Noting the importance of the economic ties between the Commonwealth states, Mr. Kravchuk hinted Ukraine might eventually sign. "The time will come and Ukraine will make a decision," he said.

In the new charter, the leaders agreed to establish an interstate bank, in which Russia would play the leading role, and to use the Russian ruble as the currency for trade.

"Personally, I think our biggest success was to resolve issues of economic cooperation, and to define our positions in the political and military spheres," said Belarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich.

The new Commonwealth partly destroys the rigid Soviet military structure built over several decades. It allows each of the seven signatory members to decide whether to join collective security arrangements and whether they want their own international borders to be considered Commonwealth borders.

Belarus said it wants to be a neutral state and does not want to be part of such Commonwealth provisions.

Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Tajikistan laid the groundwork for a collective security agreement during a May 15, 1992, meeting in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent.

Mr. Yeltsin said each of the Commonwealth participants would send 500 men to fortify Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. Russia already has troops in the region.

Tajikistan has been wracked for months by civil war in which hundreds have been killed and thousands displaced. Commonwealth leaders have repeatedly voiced their concern that drugs and weapons could flow into their states from Afghanistan.

Mr. Yeltsin said he was not bothered by the looser political and military arrangements provided by the new charter.

"We think the Commonwealth may have diverse forms of coop-

eration...provided only this does not destroy the Commonwealth," he said.

Details were not released regarding military talks between the four former Soviet republics that have nuclear weapons. The nations' defense ministers also met Thursday.

Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan inherited the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear arsenal. But only Russia is allowed to keep the weapons under terms of the START I Treaty.

Ukrainian officials have said they want Ukraine to become a nuclear-free state, but have demanded security guarantees as well as material compensation before it can ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Russia and Kazakhstan have ratified the pact and Belarus has said it will ratify it. Mr. Shushkevich, the Belarussian leader, said Friday that Belarus already considers the missiles on its territory to be Russian property.

The Commonwealth leaders decided to meet again on April 30 in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. Their prime ministers are scheduled to gather in Moscow in March.

There were 15 republics in the former Soviet Union. The three Baltic nations, as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan, decided last year not to join the Commonwealth.

## Croats, Serbs fight on in Krajina

ZAGREB (R) — Fresh clashes erupted Saturday in a Serb enclave of Croatia, overshadowing international efforts to end fighting as new talks on former Yugoslavia began in Geneva.

The fighting began after Croatian troops stormed into a U.N.-monitored neutral zone in the Serb-held Krajina region of Croatia Friday and Serbs seized heavy weapons from U.N. depots to beat back the attack.

A Reuters Television crew reported artillery duels around the Serb-held Zemunik Airport near the Adriatic port of Zadar Saturday.

They said Croat troops, encamped in hills about five kilometres west of Zadar, were firing laser-guided missiles at a Serb village which was shooting back with artillery.

The outbreak of fighting, which follows months of military tension along Krajina's U.N.-patrolled boundary, threw a grim shadow over a new round of peace talks in Geneva Saturday in a bid to end a nine-month old war in neighbouring Bosnia.

Croatian police sources in Zadar said at least six Croat soldiers were killed and 15 injured in Friday's clashes.

The figure could not be independently confirmed, but the Reuters crew saw a number of Croatian soldiers in the town's main hospital, most wounded by sniper bullets or shrapnel.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said Croatian forces using tanks had kept up attacks on southern parts of the enclave throughout the night. It said the Serb forces had sustained minor casualties, but gave no further details.

Serbian-led federal Yugoslavia threatened Friday to intervene in the Krajina conflict, possibly igniting a new Serb-Croat war, if U.N. peacekeepers failed to protect the Serb minority there.

"(Yugoslavia) has both the right and duty to protect the Serbian people, which it will undoubtedly do, if the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) fails to do so," Federal President Dobrica Cosic said in a letter to the U.N. Security Council.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali de-



Residents of Sarajevo look at a map of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the boundaries of the proposed 10 provinces (AFP photo)

nounced Croatia's "unilateral military action" Friday, and said U.N. forces were trying to prevent any escalation.

"UNPROFOR is taking all steps in its power to prevent the situation from escalating," he said in a statement.

On Saturday, however, there was no sign of any U.N. soldiers in the area.

Instead large numbers of Croatian troops in full combat gear were seen moving towards the areas of fighting, some in convoys which included tanks, others on foot.

Zadar itself, under a general alert since Friday, was like a ghost town Saturday morning, with very few cars in the streets and police checkpoints throughout the city.

The Reuters crew reported that European Community and United Nations monitors in the area

said they had been told by Croatian military police to stay in Zadar's main hotel and ordered not to go anywhere near fighting areas.

Monitors said it was the first time the Croatian authorities had imposed such restrictions on their movements.

The Reuters journalists said police had been ordered by Croatian military to bar reporters from going near the fighting.

Krajina, dubbed Sector South, is one of four U.N.-Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia where Serb rebels still rule a year after a U.N.-mediated ceasefire formally ended the republic's war of secession from Yugoslavia.

The areas are surrounded by so-called "pink" — neutral — zones which divide the Croat and Serb front lines and are monitored but not patrolled by UNPROFOR.

## Sihanouk proposes May presidential vote

PEKING (Agencies) — Cambodian Prince Norodom Sihanouk, seeking to end controversy over a date for his country's presidential elections, Saturday proposed they be held at the same time as voting for parliament in May.

Prince Sihanouk, now staying at his Peking residence for rest and medical treatment, earlier this week proposed April 5 as the best date.

However, in a written statement issued Saturday, he said he had changed his mind "to put an end to the controversy and the manoeuvrings of politicians."

He said the vote for president, in which he will be a leading candidate, should be held at exactly the same time as elections for the Constituent Assembly.

The U.N.-organised voting is scheduled for May although no exact date has been fixed. It is designed to bring peace to the South East Asian nation.

Prince Sihanouk said a simulta-

neous vote would save time and money and he had forwarded his suggestion to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the last group of Cambodian refugees from the last camp in Thailand under Khmer Rouge control returned to their homeland Friday.

"We wish safe journey for the last group of returning refugees from Site 8," said United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative Sergio Viera de Mello as he closed the Site 8 camp.

A group of 178 refugees gathered in a field in the hillside camp to hear his address before boarding buses heading back to Cambodia.

Site 8, once home to more than 50,000 refugees, was built in 1985 after thousands of civilian followers of the radical Khmer Rouge fled attacks by the Vietnamese and sought refuge behind the Ta Ngoc border mountain range.

It was one of three refugee

camps under Khmer Rouge control.

In a separate development, two key architects of the peace plan said Friday Cambodia could be partitioned after the May elections if the Khmer Rouge guerrilla group does not participate.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans spoke with reporters after arriving for talks with U.N. officials and Cambodian leaders aimed at pushing the beleaguered peace process forward.

Next Wednesday is the last day for the Khmer Rouge to register its political party to contest the election. Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan told Mr. Alatas in Bangkok Thursday his group will boycott the polls.

The Khmer Rouge control up to 20 per cent of Cambodia's territory and about 10 per cent of the population, according to U.N. officials.

## START II is under attack in Moscow

MOSCOW (AP) — The latest U.S.-Russian arms treaty is under attack from headline lawmakers even before debate on ratifying the sweeping agreement has begun.

But Defence Ministry officials praise the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) as a contribution to international political stability, and Russian arms control experts predict it will pass the Supreme Soviet legislature.

The Supreme Soviet is expected to begin hearings next week on the treaty signed on Jan. 3 by former President George Bush and Boris Yeltsin after a furious final round of negotiations before Mr. Bush's term expired.

The treaty would slash long-range arsenals by two-thirds on both sides over the next decade, the deepest cuts in nuclear weapons history.

While U.S. lawmakers are expected to approve the treaty, prominent hardliner Sergei Baburin told the Associated Press it could be a long time before the document comes to a vote in the supreme Soviet.

Mr. Baburin did not say which way he would advise his supporters to vote, nor how many supporters they have in the 252-member body. But he and other hardliners object to the speed with which Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev concluded the pact.

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## Angola rebels, government agree to peace talks

LUANDA (Agencies) — U.N.-ITA rebel leader Jonas Savimbi has agreed to start U.N.-brokered peace talks with the government next week, U.N. officials announced as violence flared throughout war-torn Angola.

The agreement Friday came at the end of a sobering week for the government. Rebels defeated government troops in the key northern oil town of Soyo, and threatened to overrun the oil-rich Cabinda area and diamond mines in the northeast.

The rebels have targeted Angola's oil and diamond industries, trying to cripple the government financially. Soyo is the base for foreign oil companies, including U.S.-based Texaco.

In Washington, State Department officials said the rebels were holding 20 foreigners in the Soyo area, but added that efforts were under way for their release. They said none were Americans, but did not say what nations the prisoners were from.

Texaco said all its employees were evacuated earlier in the week, but a spokesman for the Belgian oil company, Petrofina S.A., said Wednesday that 18 company employees were believed held by rebels in Soyo.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher expressed alarm late Friday over the U.N.-ITA attacks in Soyo, saying they jeopardised the economy and environment.

"The United States will condemn in the strongest terms any attacks on U.S. facilities or personnel in Cabinda or elsewhere in Angola," Mr. Boucher said.

A U.N. official in Luanda, the Angolan capital, said Mr. Savimbi agreed to send representatives to the talks next week in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said plans to hold the talks Monday were changed because of difficulties in arranging security for rebels. A new date has not been set, said the official.

Meanwhile, Margaret Antevie, the U.N. special representative for Angola, flew to U.N. Headquarters in New York Friday, where she was to meet with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to discuss extending the U.N. mandate in Angola, which expires on Jan. 31.

In Luanda, armed mobs attacked merchants believed to be from neighbouring Zaire in several city markets Friday, apparently in response to unconfirmed government reports that Zairean troops were fighting alongside the rebels in northern Angola.

An estimated half million Zaireans live in the Angolan capital. Many are Angolians who fled to Zaire in the 1960s during the war against Portuguese rule.

Fierce fighting has been reported in the past 10 days in Huambo, the headquarters of UNITA — the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. UNITA radio said government aerial bombardment had killed at least 1,000 people.

### WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

#### De Klerk's popularity 'at lowest level'

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Reformist leader F.W. De Klerk's popularity has dropped to its lowest level since he became South Africa's president in 1989, a poll released Friday said. Results indicate the lowest level of confidence, by both races (blacks and whites), since he became state president," said Christine Woessner, deputy managing director of the Markinor Research Group which conducted the Markinor Gallup poll. Mr. De Klerk has been hit by political turmoil, escalating violence and economic recession since his referendum in March last year on democratic reforms which he won with a 68.7 per cent majority among the country's five million whites. The poll carried out in November said confidence in Mr. De Klerk's ability to lead the country "very well" had dropped among whites to 25 per cent from 46 per cent in May last year, and among blacks to eight per cent from 28 per cent. "President De Klerk has lost all the ground he gained in the May 1992 survey and more," Ms. Woessner said.

#### Malta hopes to join EC

LISBON (R) — Maltese Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami said he hoped his Mediterranean island could join the European Community (EC) in the next round of enlargement. Mr. Fenech Adami told reporters after talks with Portuguese Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva that he expected the European Community's Executive Commission to give a favourable opinion on Malta's 1990 application to join the EC soon. Entry negotiations could then proceed in parallel with those of Norway, which is also awaiting a favourable "avis" from the Commission, he added. "In the same way as negotiations with Norway are going to open once there is an avis... once a positive avis is published there will be no reason why negotiations for the accession of Malta should not open as well," Mr. Fenech Adami said. "I hope to see Malta within the next enlargement of the Community," he added.

#### 4 new ministers take office in Bonn

BONN (R) — Four new German ministers were sworn in at a limited reshuffle of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition cabinet. Former banker Guenter Rexrodt, 51, became new economics minister, the most important post affected. Mr. Rexrodt, from the Liberal Free Democrats (FDP) who are junior coalition partners, replaced Juergen Moellmann after he quit this month in an influence-peddling scandal. Wolfgang Boetsch, 54, took the oath of office before parliament as new post and telecommunications minister. Mr. Boetsch, long-time parliamentary leader of the right-wing Christian Social Union (CSU), will quickly be tested on key issues of postal reform and mobile telephones. Jochen Borchert, from Kohl's own Christian Democrats (CDU), became the new agriculture minister to replace Ignaz Kiechle, who retired. Matthias Wissmann, a CDU economics spokesman, became new research and technology minister.

#### Charles should still be king — poll

LONDON (R) — Prince Charles's relationship with a married woman has sullied the monarchy's reputation but most Britons think he should still become king, according to an opinion poll. And a majority of people questioned for the poll in the Daily Express said they would be quite happy for the heir to the throne to marry his friend Camilla Parker-Bowles if he was divorced from his estranged wife Princess Diana. Of those questioned for the ICM Survey, seven out of 10 said the publication of an intimate telephone conversation widely held to be between the prince and Mrs. Parker-Bowles, a married mother of two, had damaged the monarchy. But 59 per cent were in favour of Prince Charles succeeding his mother Queen Elizabeth. About the same number said they would be quite happy for him to marry again if he wished.

#### Malaysian sultans lose more perks

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Malaysia Friday stripped more privileges from its nine hereditary rulers, who have opposed efforts to remove their immunity from the law. International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz said the nine sultans would no longer be given shares in government companies that go public or be issued business licences. "My ministry had previously allocated 100,000 shares of Edaran Otomobil Nasional (EON) to each sultan. Such allocations will no longer be made," she was quoted as saying by the national Bernama News Agency. EON is the state-controlled distributor of Malaysia's national car, Proton Saga. She said the government had previously approved business permits for a sultan, his wife and palace officials to operate rice mills and even lorries. The government and sultans are at loggerheads over plans to remove the rulers' legal immunity. Malaysia's parliament early this week endorsed constitutional amendments to divest the rulers of their legal immunity and their power to pardon family members of criminal charges.

#### Lithuanian presidential race starts

VILNIUS (R) — Lithuania's presidential race started officially Saturday with acting head of state Algirdas Brazauskas a clear favourite in opinion polls. The Baltic nation of 3.5 million people will have to choose of Feb. 14 between ex-Communist turned nationalist Brazauskas and his only rival, Stasys Lozoraitis, currently ambassador to the United States. Five other contenders failed to obtain the required 20,000 signatures to stand in the election. An opinion poll carried out this week by Lithuanian Television and radio showed 51 per cent of voters favour Brazauskas while only 26 per cent support Lozoraitis.

## COLUMN

### More Japan boys have fits after video games

TOKYO (R) — Two boys in northern Japan were taken to hospital after suffering epileptic fits while playing video games, the latest in a series of such incidents. The boys, aged 10 and 11, from Kushiro in eastern Hokkaido, had fits while playing the games. "These fits do not last long and there was no need for them to spend the night at the hospital," a doctor at the Kushiro Citizen's Hospital said. He said an over-sensitivity to light was the most likely cause. Doctors have confirmed at least 16 similar cases in Japan and the Health Ministry said it would set up a panel to study the effects of video games on children. Britain launched its own study this month following reports that two boys in Wales had fits while playing video games. Video games sold in Europe and the United States by Japanese game giants Nintendo and Sega enterprises already carry warning labels. Nintendo plans to put warnings on products sold in Japan from next month. Sega has similar plans. Nintendo, which has a 90 per cent domestic market share for home video games, has 700 million in use worldwide.

### Carreras concert pulls in the big notes

TOKYO (R) — Japanese opera buffs, known for their willingness to pay big money for tickets, will have a chance to splash out as much as 80,000 yen (\$641) for a seat when Spanish tenor Jose Carreras visits Tokyo. That is the going rate at a charity concert planned for March, the proceeds of which will go towards the fight against leukaemia. "Japanese are willing to pay for high-class culture and this is for a good cause," a concert organiser said. Carreras himself recovered from leukaemia in 1988 after doctors had given him a one in 100 chance of survival.

### Miss Whiplash turns up in Florida

LONDON (R) — The disappearance of Britain's best-known prostitute seems to have been elaborately planned, police said, suggesting publicity rather than crime was the main ingredient. Fears grew for Linda St. Clair when she failed to turn up to a meeting with journalists in the southern resort town of Brighton at the weekend, where she was planning to discuss a "dirt file" on members of parliament. Police suspect that the "tart with a heart," as she likes to be known, may have spirited herself away as a publicity stunt to promote her new book or to avoid a huge tax bill.

### Cinema dispenses modernity with nostalgia

LONDON (R) — A cinema in the heart of London's entertainment district is restoring the back-row "love seats" that brought romance to earlier generations of filmgoers. But each of the 14 double seats being introduced by the Prince Charles Cinema on Feb. 14 — St. Valentine's Day — will be provided with a discreet condom dispenser, in line with modern safe-sex teaching. "We don't expect they will be used in the back row but probably pretty soon afterwards," a management spokesman said.

### Canadians put a stop to sign dispute

MONTREAL (R) — After careful reflection, Quebec's language police have decided that "stop" is a legal French word, and therefore no longer needs to be replaced with the word "arret" on stop signs. The French word for stop was also found acceptable but municipalities will have to make a choice and stop putting both words on signs by late 1996. "The two words are French," said a provincial spokesman. The new ruling rescinds a 1989 order requiring municipalities to get rid of "stop/arret" signs and replace them with "arret" only by Jan. 1, 1993.

### Jail switch pair no budding geniuses

LOS ANGELES (R) — A friend in need is a friend indeed, so when Wilfred Genus was sentenced to 15 days in jail he asked his old buddy, Albert Flowers, to serve the sentence for him, and Flowers agreed. But Genus, 20, was caught when he visited the jail where Flowers, 32, was incarcerated in his place. Since he had cocaine and a pistol with him, he faces 10 years in prison.